

Lowton East Neighbourhood Development Forum (LENDF)

Contact Email Address: lendf99@gmail.com

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12 August 2024 at Lowton Social Club

Chair	Prof. Graham Wardle (GW)
Secretary	Liz Brown (LB)
Treasurer	Irene Thomson (IT)
Minutes Secretary	Gill Turner (GT)
Councillor	Garry Lloyd (GL)
Councillor	Mike Smith (MS)
Guest	Dr Neeta James (Braithwaite Road Surgery)
Apologies	Julie Shawcross (JS) Cllr Jenny Gregory (JG)

No. of attendees = 16

1. Welcome and previous minutes

Minutes not read out at meeting, but copies have been sent out by email, put on the Facebook page and on the LENDF website. New visitors and guests were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Questions for your local GP practice:

The group welcomed Dr James and thanked her for attending the meeting in her own time. She answered questions sent prior to the meeting and from people at the meeting.

- *COVID is still with us, how can the community keep down infections?*
There is no requirement to test for COVID now; although tests are still available in the supermarkets if you wish to check. Vaccine appointments continue to be offered to vulnerable people. COVID and other airborne viruses can be minimised by wearing a mask in confined spaces such as: aeroplane/train/bus although not always possible if eating.
- *Where would people get the latest COVID vaccination if offered?*
Vaccinations need to be stored at very cold temperatures and so are organised by Wigan Borough Federated Healthcare (<https://wiganhealthcare.co.uk/>) who organise and set up temporary clinics.
- *Will there a combined vaccine for COVID and Flu?*
It is unlikely this will happen. You might be offered separate injections at the same appointment, or at separate appointments.
- *Some people still find it difficult to see a GP, please explain the appointment process.*
Dr James explained what happens at the Braithwaite Road surgery: A third of appointments are released up to 4 weeks in advance; a third of the appointments are released a week in advance; and a third of the appointments can only be booked on the day. This is to cater for urgent and non-urgent appointments. To book an appointment for the same day, telephone the surgery at 08:00, state the problem and ask if the doctor can see you that day. If you live close by, you or a representative, could also ask for an appointment at the reception desk. The doctors have 30 appointments per day, so 10 appointments are still available per doctor

at the beginning of the day. The later you ring, the less likely you are to get an appointment on the same day. Dr James reported that some people didn't turn up for their appointments (DNAs), this was most frequent when the appointment had been booked up to 4 weeks in advance. **Please help to free up more appointments by ringing to cancel your appointment if you no longer need it.** Doctors are expected to provide 75 appointments per day per 1000 patients. If computer literate, you might be able to book an appointment online via the **myGP app**, this may ease pressure on the surgery telephones for others. The myGP app also allows you to order repeat prescriptions and look at your medical details.

- *What can I do if I am ill on the day but all the appointments for that day have gone or the surgery is closed?*
Ring 101 to speak to a Care Navigator who is trained to ask questions then offer advice, and if necessary, pass you on to the right service. Services include being rung back by a nurse or a doctor, then depending on the severity: offered a possible appointment at a late-night surgery; advised to go to A&E; or they may call an ambulance for you. (If relevant and possible, take a temperature reading and/or oximeter reading before calling)
- *How do I book an appointment with the Practice Nurse/ Healthcare Practitioner?*
People can call in the surgery or telephone. Appointments for the Practice Nurse can be booked about 2 months in advance, and the Healthcare Practitioner can be booked about 3 months in advance. Again, please help to free up appointments by ringing to cancel your appointment if you no longer need it.
- *When a patient has a telephone appointment with the doctor, sometimes the patient is waiting for the phone to ring for several hours.....*
Dr James explained that sometimes the surgery is very busy as previous appointments overrun, or there is a medical emergency with a previous appointment, or the doctor is ill. A discussion took place about why reception staff do not call people to advise the appointment will be late or the day after. This will be discussed back at the practice.
- *Why does it take so long to get a repeat prescription?*
Dr James said it takes up to 24/48 hours with the doctor, as they each have to thoroughly check and sign up to 120 prescriptions per day. The pharmacy is now asking for 7 days' notice. They need this time to get the medication and make up 4-week pill boxes. Some pill boxes are made up remotely.
People can send repeat prescription requests online – this can't be used for other medications they had previously, only for re-ordering of current regular medications.
In addition, a repeat prescription can be rejected if the form is used for requesting other medication, if the form is submitted too early, or if the patient should have a test before the next set of medication but has not done so.
- *Why are some regular medications changed by the pharmacy and not the doctor?*
NHS England usually organise this. Common medications such as hay fever pills, shower gels, and paracetamol can now be bought over the counter so are no longer prescribed. Often the brand name of the medication will change although the replacement medication will have exactly the same active ingredient. It will change because the alternative is cheaper, or the original brand is no longer available. The medication is only switched if it is cost effective, with no risk to the patient and no safety issues; saving the NHS millions of pounds. There are too many patients affected to be individually notified.
- *Limited access to the **myGP App** from the NHS?*
Some people have full access and can see blood and other results and some people have limited access. There is a lock icon on some options. If you phone or call into the surgery, staff may be able to help with specific issues for a specific person. Someone stated they had been

in to the surgery three times and still did not have full access. Please note: Some of the much older medical records have not been uploaded to the app.

- *Once dispensed, medicine will not be taken back, even if unopened. Why?*

A significant number of medicines are affected by temperature, the pharmacist will have no idea where the medication has been kept so can't guarantee the medicine is safe. Any unused medicines should **not** be thrown away in rubbish bins nor flushed down the toilet. **Any out of date or unused medicines** should be taken to the pharmacist for safe disposal.

3. Police update

Apologies were given as the police representative who was supposed to be here was ill. Graham and Liz have been in recent contact with the police and passed on this information:

- Off road bikes/scooters and cars driven dangerously are still a problem. **You can report them by calling 101 or anonymously on 0800 555111 at Crime Stoppers.** Please give location, date, time, and if possible, distinct colours, make and reg of vehicle, clothing and estimated age of rider. If you know where the vehicle is stored also state this. You can also report online at <https://bit.ly/ReportingASB> The more reports are placed, the more likely the police can target certain roads at certain times. Please keep reporting incidents so a clear picture can be built up. (ASB = Anti-Social Behaviour)
- Paperwork for Section 59 notices for ASB driving are with Angela Addis at the council for action. Inspector Mike Crosthwaite will chase up the notices as it means police can confiscate these vehicles without a verbal warning first.
- There is extra funding to target ASB driving until September. Called "**Operation Hurricane**", drones are used to follow suspects and discover where the bikes are stored. Police vehicles are then sent out to confiscate them. There have already been successful confiscations.
- In Liverpool, police have started to spray off road bikers passing within 10m with smart water. It is impregnated with DNA and it takes weeks to get off. If police subsequently get a match from a person or clothing, then this can lead to a successful prosecution. Greater Manchester Police are hoping to use this soon.
- Covering our ward (and others) are Inspector Crosthwaite and Sergeant Rowe. Covering our Lowton East ward are PC Reid, PCSOs Brown and Dillon. [PCSOs have limited transportation and can only use buses and walk to get around].

4. Community Speed Watch (CSW) within Lowton and Golborne and LAGTAC data

- **See attached document for summary traffic data compiled by LAGTAC.** Thanks to Graham and Kath Houlton for its compilation.
- More CSW volunteers are needed to target areas of speeding within Lowton and Golborne. Email Graham on lagtac.data@gmail.com for more information. Training may be undertaken during the week or at weekends. Within our community 3 people have completed training, and 2 people have nearly completed training. The GMP's website 'vacancy application' portal will be open again soon for CSW volunteers (aged 18+).
- The police, with Graham and Kath, have safety checked, and approved 5 roads that can be monitored by CSW volunteers. This number will increase over time and will be based on traffic data and intelligence compiled by LaGTAC and future CSW operations.
- CSW is passive speed monitoring. However, from 2 recent CSW operations 10 letters have been sent out by police to people caught speeding in excess of GMP's discretionary allowances. If caught speeding again, a second letter will go out, and if caught a third time the police will attend their address.
- Volunteers attend different roads on different days and times. **Often the number of motorists speeding will decrease for a while** after the speed checks have been done. However, over time the speed will again increase, making it necessary to revisit locations

periodically. If speeding persists in these areas, then the traffic policing unit will attend with the power to issue Notices of intended Prosecution (NiP) - with fines and penalty points.

- We are making slow but steady progress in making roads safer. As usual: red tape and bureaucracy have a lot to answer for!! Although sometimes frustrating, there isn't another method. There is no quick fix!

5. Parkside Phase 1, 2 and 3 updates (affecting Winwick Lane and Lane Head area)

- **See attached presentation from Liz for more detail and for a link to enter your email so Tritax Symmetry can keep you updated to their progress.**
- Phase 1 – the link road is open but not being used due to problems with the M6 J22 bridge.
- Phase 2 Consultation – This was only open for about 2 weeks in July and official plans will be published by St Helens Council website in September. These are hopefully ready for the next LHSRG meeting on **Monday 16 September at the Travel Lodge, Lane Head 19:00**. All people affected are welcome. A Council Officer has been invited to hear our concerns.
- **Plans do not include ANY mitigation for Lowton roads**, and the wider impact of traffic has been trivialised. Councils don't seem to care that it will further affect illegal NOx data on Winwick Lane. Both Wigan, Warrington and St Helens Council have a duty of care to residents, this fact is being ignored in the Lane Head area.
- Phase 3 in particular will change the local area completely as Lowton is hemmed in by traffic.
- There will be an informal public consultation by **Tritax Symmetry (TS)** in 2025 for Phase 3.
- It is critical that Wigan and Warrington Councillors are in regular contact with TS as Phase 3 plans take further shape.

6. Councillors' business

- New MPs are having to ensure their office, phones and email are safe from increased security risks associated with their role. Because of this, **Jo Platt** will be contactable properly by the end of September. Meanwhile her email jo.platt.mp@parliament.uk is open for queries, please be patient as new MPs initially get a backlog of mail to deal with. Please add your postal address so she knows you are in her constituency. She also has an official social media presence.
- Addendum: Garry received an email from the Council Traffic Department stating a moving traffic camera **will** be placed on Winwick Lane in a few weeks' time in test mode. Once operational, warning letters will be issued, then PCNs after 6 months of operation.

7. Updates/Questions:

- a) Potholes have been filled in with crushed stone on McColls' carpark. It's better than the previous pebbles but not as good as tarmac.
- b) Pond Street Park is shut for renovation from 12th August for 4/5 weeks. Winton Park has been refurbished and now open.

8. AOB

- LENDF won't be able to process Brighter Borough funds for others now that the rules have changed. If you need BB funding, speak to the Lowton East councillors. Once agreed, they will send you a link to fill in. It is essential that you read BB criteria/rules otherwise funding may be rejected - even if councillors have agreed funding.
- Other AOBs to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Next meeting:

Mon **14** October 2024 at 7:30pm at Lowton Social Club
Guest speakers from United Utilities